

# Aotearoa Youth Network



May 1995 Number 24

# WHAT IS AOTEAROA YOUTH NETWORK?

The Aotearoa Youth Network is an organisation dedicated to building links between youth who are active in "progressive" politics. It is open to all and seeks to provide a place for discussion, learning and action across organisations, individuals and causes.

AYN was established at the 1993 Peace, Power and Politics Conference, where over 600 people (including over 150 young people) gathered. The main activity of AYN so far has been the production of a monthly newsletter, which presently goes to over 200 people, and reaches a far wider audience. AYN has established a positive presence in the progressive peoples' movement, and hopes to go beyond "networking" to assist in the formation of new organisations and groups.

We want to put anything in this magazine that you can write - news, articles, poetry, letters, anything. The more you write in, the more this magazine acts as a networking tool. We attempt to print anything you send without cutting but please note:

- We will not print anything that is overtly racist, sexist, homophobic or offensive to any marginalised group. If you want to debate issues that may offend people, try and be very clear about what you are trying to do, and why.

Deadline: end of May.

# Peace Movement Aotearoa

Hi! I'm Lou, the new coordinator and administrator of Peace Movement Aotearoa, based in the Peace and Environment Centre here in Wellington. I thought it would be good for you all young and not so young (but vibrant and young at heart I'm sure!) activists and interested people out there to get a bit of a background on PMA and what it's all about.

PMA has been going for a few years now and was started because people perceived the need to give the Aotearoa Peace scene a bit of cohesion, organisation and general assistance.

What is the role of PMA?

We act as a support base for peace groups and individuals throughout the country, which means that we have roughly four basic functions:

1. We network and communicate between peace groups and individuals in Aotearoa. This may involve visiting groups and individuals, keeping contact by phone, mail (and e-mail in the very near future) and so on, offering advice, support and help for people wanting to respond to peace issues.
2. We coordinate campaigns on various issues. At present we are formulating ideas on a focus for a campaign for 1995. If you have any ideas it would be good to hear from you.
3. We provide a focal point for information dissemination, peace research and education.
4. We network with other groups which fall under the broad definition of peace - dealing with issues of conflict and exploitation in the human and

natural worlds. For example, our work on anti nuclear issues brings us into close contact with groups such as Greenpeace and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

Quite simply, we collect and pass on information (and encouragement). Obviously, our role means that we deal with a number of different issues; ANZAC frigates, nuclear free Aotearoa and Pacific, the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty and World Court Project, war toys, non violence and commitment to peace education in schools and so on. It all depends on what you people out there are concerned with and want to put energy into, and what is currently happening at home and abroad.

Issues that may be coming to prominence within the near future (if they are not already) include: the French plans to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific, the final stages of the Non Proliferation Treaty, the situation in Bosnia, Aotearoa's Military Assistance Programme and Government Military spending, China's Human Rights abuses and nuclear testing and the Chinese Governments official relationship with Aotearoa, conflict resolution in our own communities, etc. As you can see, there are a lot of issues that deserve attention and energy. If there are any things that interest you it may be worth your while getting in touch with us especially if you are uncertain about what is going on in your local area and have difficulties making contacts with other like minded groups or individuals. We're here to help!

The Office:

The PMA office is situated in central

Wellington on Cuba Street, one of the more happening streets in Wellington that is not entirely over run by suits, a la Lambton Quay. This is where I operate from, alongside a number of volunteer workers. I field calls, help put out a regular newsletter, do action alerts, link people up with experts in the field of their concern, offer advice and support, work on campaigns, put volunteers to work on various things, keep the office running smoothly, and other things beside! One of the important aspects of my job is to travel around and visit local peace groups and people and connect them with other peace activists in their area, buoy them up if need be, and so on. This makes it important for us to have someone who can be in the office during working hours while I'm out of town. Because I'm very new in the office (at the time of writing I have only been in the job a week!), I have yet to experience the joy of doing some of these things!

#### The Researchers:

PMA aims to keep up with current issues of concern to the Peace Movement. We support researchers, one of whom is based in the Wellington Office. Recently Nicky Hager and Jo Buchanan have been doing research work for PMA on stuff like the Governmental Military Aid Programme and also Government communications. In the past we have published extensive information on military bases in Aotearoa, the cost of ANZAC frigates and military spending, alternative forms of defence, and nuclear free and independence issues.

#### The PMA working group:

The working group meets 4 times a year to determine policy and priorities for the PMA office. These meetings also bring together peace activists from every part of the country who are able to share experiences and ideas from their local campaigns.

#### The National Peace Workshops:

Every year at Queen's Birthday Weekend, many activists come together to share their skills and knowledge, provide insight into the direction of the peace movement and gain energy for their campaigns over the following year. These gatherings are open to any person who is concerned about peace in its many forms. The National Peace Workshops also provide a forum for selecting the working group and setting broad guidelines for PMA to follow.

#### How we can help you:

If you need info about peace issues, want find like minded individuals and groups in your area, or want to get involved in the peace movement,

#### CONTACT US!!!

#### Do you want to be involved?

We need volunteers to work in the office to keep it running while I'm out of town, so it would be really good if someone could contact me about getting some training in the office. I'll do my best to make it enjoyable!!

We also need people to work on



Of course we have progressed a great deal, first they were coming by bullock cart, then by jeep — and now this!

specific projects as they arise - we get some really juicy investigative opportunities from time to time, so if you want piece of the action, as they say, get in touch.

At the moment we're advertising for people to go on the working group. Are you interested? All you need is the energy, enthusiasm, the ability to travel four times a year to attend meetings, and two people to support your application.

Like any organisation that is into activism and is not funded by the Business Round Table or any other such undesirables, we are always in need of any financial support people can give us. We have a pledge scheme set up whereby people have arranged to donate us a set amount of money each week, fortnight, month, etc. These contributions range from around 5 dollars to whatever - whatever you can afford we would be most grateful to receive, no matter if you think that it is not much. Every little bit makes a difference to us, especially if we have lots of people helping out. While regular pledges are desirable, random donations from those who find it hard to predict their earnings from one week to the next are also welcomed.

#### How to contact us:

Peace Movement Aotearoa.  
PO Box 9314  
Te Aro  
Wellington  
Phone / Fax 04 382 8129

#### Or visit us:

The Peace and Environment Centre  
Blue Star Building  
264 Cuba St  
Te Aro  
Wellington

Kia Kaha,

• Louise May, Wellington

# Tuapeka Dam Project - Questions Addressed

ECNZ is proposing to build another dam on the Clutha River. Here, the Friends of Beaumont ask some questions about the dam and provide answers.

## 1. Will the project ever commence?

ECNZ have stated repeatedly that if residents affected by the project object to the scheme, it will not go ahead. It is also a requirement of the Resource Management Act that property owners affected would have to approve of the project.

- There is ample evidence of residents objecting to the scheme. ECNZ have bought only 15 or so properties affected and none of the larger holdings, the owners of which say they will never sell.
- Even those who now lease their properties from ECNZ, having sold them, say they oppose the hydro project.
- There is no Public Works Act now, so properties cannot be taken off owners against their wishes, even though ECNZ may have all the consents necessary to commence the project.

## 2. Is ECNZ likely to gain the consents necessary?

This is doubtful. The new District and Regional Plans will be in place by the time they apply for consents.

With the Clutha District Plan, there is already ample evidence that the Council would prefer cheaper and safer forms of electricity production other than "traditional methods" (Hydro), because of the devastating effects on the environment caused by a reservoir.

- One factor is the necessity in the District and Regional Plans for "continuous flow" to be guaranteed for the river. Clearly, an "inland tidal" regime of the proposed reservoir, involving a daily fluctuation, or operating level of 2 meters, does not fit this.
- There are existing consents for such activities such as gold mining, quarrying, etc. Consents for a new reservoir would destroy such local businesses as they could not relocate.
- Activities such as fishing and fisheries are covered in the Resource Management Act - these have to be protected in their natural state.
- It is not a foregone conclusion that ECNZ would be able to get around the Forest Amendment Act and be able to inundate the indigenous forests in the area, first destroying them with herbicides and bulldozers.

## 3. What about the cemeteries in the area?

Cemeteries in the area are covered by the Burials and Cremations Act 1984. Since cemeteries are not resources, they are not covered by the Resource Management Act, and are subject to

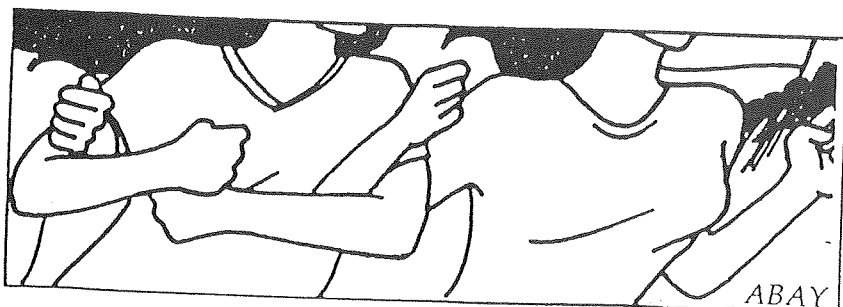
consents applied for under that act.

- A Cemetery remains a cemetery, even though it may be closed by the Minister in charge in the Act. It cannot be used for any other purpose, such as acting as a reservoir floor.
- Relatives close to those already buried may continue to be buried in a cemetery even if it closed. This would be impossible under 30 meters of water.
- Legislation similar to the Clyde Dam Empowering Act would have to be passed in order to allow ECNZ to remove the cemeteries concerned and flatten them in order to flood them with water. Such legislation is seen as unlikely to occur, especially under an MMP political environment.
- It is seen as ECNZ's first responsibility to address the question of cemeteries, because if they fail with that, the whole project falls over.

## 4. Who would pay for the roading, and where would the roading go?

In a September 1994 report from their consultants, seven options were given for re routing the roads through to Central Otago. All involved Balclutha through Rongahere on the left side of the opposed reservoir, through to Raes Junction etc. These options were costed.

- In Feb 1995 some more options, uncoted, were presented. These all involved a road through Lawrence and the preferred option was one requiring a huge 30 metre causeway across the reservoir some 30 metres high, over 2 km long, and of a bulk equivalent to the Avimore dam.
- Roothing costs are seen as at least the same as the cost of the proposed dam itself. It is not



clear that ECNZ would be required to pay for this. There would be some local ratepayer and taxpayer cost.

Such cost could be as high as \$300-\$500 million.

5. Would ECNZ accept responsibility for erosion and silting of the river?

Presently, ECNZ accepts no responsibility for damage caused by their releasing silt from the Roxburgh dam. This is because the 1953 Water Right does not require them to have such a responsibility.

Since early in the 1970's, when the bottom sluice (used for taking away silt) blocked up, ECNZ have run the dam while it has collected some 42 million cubic metres of silt behind it. It got so bad that it caused serious back flooding in Alexandra. Then Lake Roxburgh filled up with weed and nobody assumed responsibility for taking it away. This caused more 'shoaling' of silt.

The Regional Council, from "continuing to work together" with ECNZ over river bank protection works and river control facilities, have been extremely critical of ECNZ's operation of their dams on the Clutha River, particularly where it has involved "experiments" of releasing silt downstream of Roxburgh.

There is no guarantee that with a dam at Tuapeka Mouth, things would get any better, ECNZ would have to do something with silt collected behind Roxburgh sooner or later, otherwise the life of the dam would be severely shortened. The vast production of silt from the Kawerau Gorge cannot be contained forever.

It is likely that ECNZ will let it clog up their proposed dam at Tuapeka Mouth. When that is clogged, they will release it downstream to Balclutha. This would be coarse as well as fine silt.

6. When would ECNZ announce a commencement to Project?

They say, not before they acquire all of the land needed and possess the Resource Consents necessary. That could be in about 1998 according to their timetable.

The people liable to be affected in the area have been under "sentence of expulsion" for 30 years now.

This has caused extreme emotional stress amongst residents, marriage break ups, anguish, and dispossession through Landcorp selling leased land directly to ECNZ without consulting their tenants.

There is no end in sight to this "continuing process" of telling people that "they have not yet decided", etc.

The area (Rongahere, Beaumont has become run

down and has become ignored by local Councils over the years. Historic sites have not been properly registered with the Clutha District Council Amenities, and have been left to stagnate.

Important Maori sites, some possibly involving Maori burial grounds, have not been identified and preserved, nor are they listed as historic sites in the District Plan.

Important recreational and other developmental opportunities in the area have been ignored over the years through Council neglect and the uncertainty by private investors in the future of the area.

7. What will happen if ECNZ is broken up into 2 or more competing entities?

Investment for new generation\* would no longer come from the public purse. Already investment experts have said that the proposed Stratford gas powered station is unlikely to attract investment because renewable energy sources such as wind and solar (preferred in the Draft Plan, Clutha District

Council) can better utilise the new technologies which involved local generation and less dependence on power loss through line transmission to the grid.

Megadams such as Clyde and the proposed Tuapeka Mouth Dam are outdated technologies and have become too expensive, because of the damage they cause to agricultural resources, forestry, fisheries, recreation and roading, and are now taken as a cost against the project instead of being ignored as used to be the case.



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# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISARMAMENT ACTION FOR WOMEN MAY 24TH

**ACTION ALERT ! ACTION ALERT ! ACTION ALERT !**

On May 24th, women from around the globe will be participating in events and actions as part of International Women's day of Action for Disarmament.

This day has been set aside for women from all countries, backgrounds, and different walks of life to put energy into calling to the world's attention the need for peace and an end to nuclear and non-nuclear arms proliferation.

This day of action was established in 1982 in Britain. Women from all over the world now participate in this action.

The first day of action for disarmament held by New Zealand women was in 1983. Actions were held up and down the country in small rural communities, in towns and in the cities. In Auckland 10,000 people took part in a parade up Queen St followed by a rally at Aotea Square! In Wellington women wove wool around the Defence Building and decorated it with articles from women's lives. Nelson women began peace celebrations by releasing 200 pigeons.

Women in the Pacific have been especially affected by the spreading of the nuclear umbrella. Because of the small size, population, and consequent political weight of the Island nations in the Pacific, they have been vulnerable to exploitation by the superpowers. Thus this part of the world has been singled out as a particularly 'safe' and convenient place in which to test nuclear weaponry. People have lost their island homes and have suffered illness and death because of nuclear testing. This day of action is a chance to draw attention to these crimes and bring an end to them.

We encourage women from all over New Zealand to get together and plan actions to mark this day. Women don't need to already be part of a peace group to do this - all that is needed is enthusiasm, ideas, and people to help put them into action.

For help and information please feel free to contact Louise May at the Peace Movement Aotearoa Office in Wellington :

**Peace Movement Aotearoa**

**PO Box 9314**

**Te Aro**

**Wellington**

**Ph and fax (04) 382 8129**

Good luck everybody - I look forward to hearing from you!

Louise

**ACTION ALERT ! ACTION ALERT ! ACTION ALERT !**

# Pakaitore!

For much of the last two months, Pakaitore Marae, or the occupation of Moutoa Gardens, has been the number one news story nationally. Sadly, little of this media attention has focused on why that site was chosen, what is really happening on the marae, or what the people are trying to achieve.

Pakaitore was a small fishing village on the bank of the lower Whanganui River. Following the colonisation of Whanganui, the military took it over as a parade ground. It was on this site that 80,000 hectares of Whanganui land were sold, a sale which has long been criticised as invalid as the signatories did not understand what they were signing. Pakaitore was made part of the town of Whanganui, and became known as Moutoa. A statue on site bears witness to "The Massacre of Moutoa", a battle between pro-settler and pro-Independence Iwi. In the 1870's, the land was re-occupied by local Maori, and became a trading post between the up-river hapu and the town.

It was under Maori control, and European police were not allowed on site. The claim has never been relinquished, and the 1995 occupation is seen as a returning.

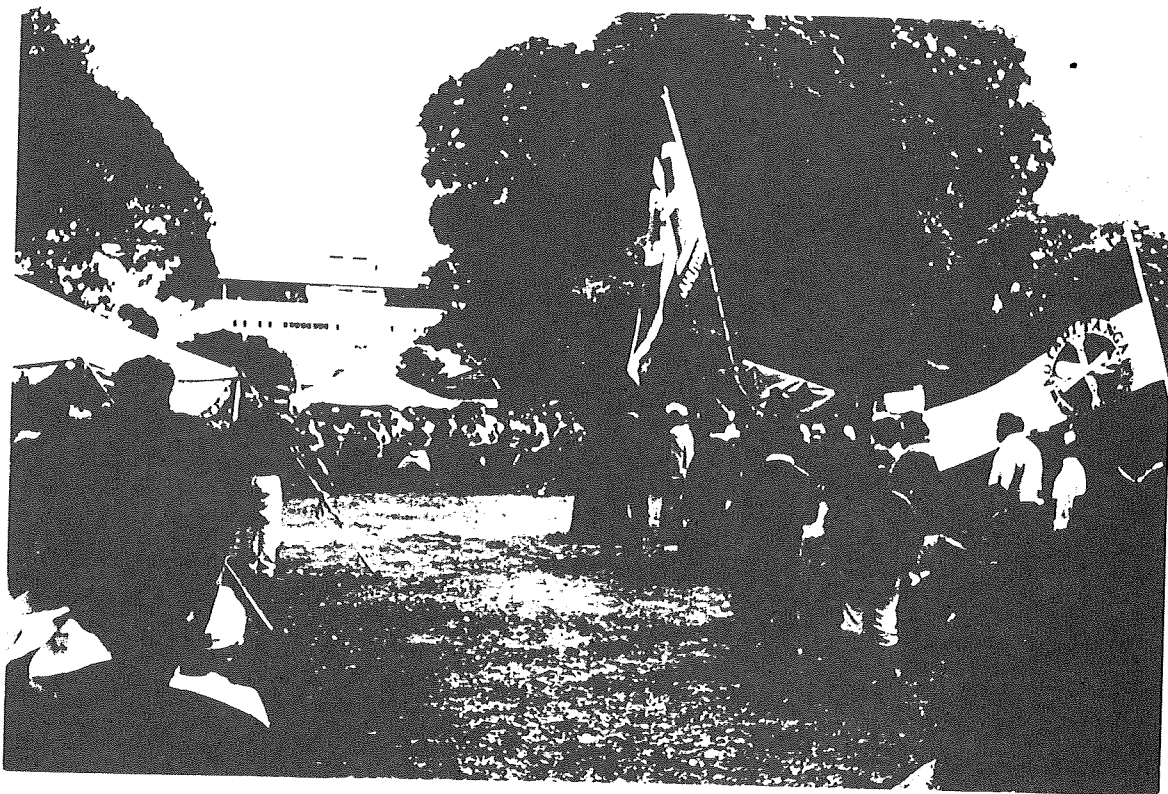
A fully functioning marae has been established. The tangata whenua, the Whanau o Pakaitore, powhiri on all visitors, maintain 24 hour security, have catered for up to 2,000

people, and hold forums covering a range of issues facing Maori. Permanent buildings have been erected, children attend a kohunga reo across the road, and there is electricity and sanitation. They have the resolve and the organisation to stay for a long time.

The occupation is, more than anything else, an assertion of Whanganuitanga - the right of Whanganui Maori to live as a sovereign people, according to their own laws, traditions, and wishes.

other occupation has been going on up-river for some time. What makes Moutoa different is that it is in the heart of the city, whereas pakeha can easily ignore remote rural lands.

When the eviction deadline expired on 31 March, 2,000 people were gathered together, singing unity songs, and prepared to be arrested. A further 300 townspeople linked hands, surrounding the marae. An eviction was simply not possible, as the 300 police present would not have had the resources to arrest,



Occupiers believe that pakeha customs and laws have not served them; it is time for a return to an independent life as Maori.

While the land at Pakaitore is sought, it is not the focus; the issue is Rangatiratanga. Toward that, the return of all Whanganui lands is demanded. Moutoa Gardens is not the only land to be occupied; an-

incarcerate, and process that many people. Occupiers are committed to non-violence, but are adamant that if they are removed, they will simply return, and keep on returning.

The city council has maintained that this is a problem for central government to deal with; occupiers agree. Their dispute is not with local administrators, but with the crown.

Seemingly to buy time, the council have referred the matter to the High Court. This will bear little weight with protesters who reject the authority of pakeha law.

People at Pakaitore hope to spark a string of occupations across Aotearoa. They see themselves as part of a greater struggle. Even if this occupation ends, the fight for independence will have been advanced.

## Tamaki College

The land on which Tamaki College lies is claimed by three tribes; Ngati Paoa, Ngati Whatua, and Ngapuhi. Ngati Whatua had long been the dominant tribe of the area, and according to Auckland University Professor, Russel Stone, they have the mana whenua. In 1750 a Ngati Paoa man married a high born Ngati Whatua leader, and they were given land to live on, centred further up the Tamaki River. Ngapuhi later invaded, virtually wiping Ngati Paoa out. The remnants of Ngati Paoa

sold 6,000 acres of land to the crown, including the college site, and fled to the Waikato. Ngati Whatua claim that this 6,000 acres is far more land than they had rights to, while a vast Ngapuhi claim includes all the lands they conquered, including Tamaki.

All three tribes have lodged Waitangi Tribunal claims, and want any sale of the land to be suspended until the claims have been settled. The Ministry of Education, meanwhile, is attempting to sell the land. The agreed purchasers, the Chinese Christian Church, want to withdraw from the deal, and the Crown is attempting to legally blind to carry through on the purchase.

Since the closure of the school over two years ago, a group have occupied the site, demanding its vesting community hands. A kohunga reo, health clinics, and other educational and community groups still use the land.

The group, "Nga Iwi Katoa", who include both local Maori and tau iwi, are seeking the return of the land for use as a community resource. Under the kaupapa "Tamaki College is community land", they seek local control of what they believe should be an asset for all the people of Tamaki, with a recognition that the land belongs to the tangata whenua.

Glen Innes, where the school is sited, is one of the poorest suburbs in Auckland. Most of the area is or was state housing, there is high unemployment, and high percentages of the population are Maori or from Pacific Island cultures. In this context, the fight for community land takes on more of a class nature than a racial one. Around 700 people of all races maintained a picket at the college for several days at the time of the eviction.

It is likely that by the time of publication, the land at Tamaki will have been re-

occupied. The occupiers have been demanding return of the land for far too long to give up now simply because they have been evicted once. However this reoccupation will have to be able to overcome the large and expensive 24 hour security force maintained on the grounds.

## Taumaranui Police Station

Through the summer Taumaranui Maori occupied the site of the proposed new police station, saying that it was Maori land. As a news story, it became overshadowed by the occupation at Pakaitore, and few people are

aware of the successful resolution which was achieved on March 30, the day of the Pakaitore eviction deadline.

The police have accepted that the land should be vested in the hands of local Maori, and have agreed to transfer title. A police station will be built on part of the site, and the police will be given free rental for thirty years. At the end of that time, the building will become the property of the Maori, who will then lease it out at commercial rates, with the police having first option as tenants. In return for the free rent, the police will pay for a carved meeting house to be built.

This agreement should be hailed and celebrated as an example of the state recognising the legitimacy of a claim, of the state and a community resolving a dispute and working toward partnership, and most of all, as a successful direct action.

## Rotorua

The Rotorua occupation arose out of fears that top tourist attraction, cultural centre, and marae Whakarewarewa, would be sold to overseas interests. Tangata whenua were afraid that they would lose control over their land. For several weeks people have been occupying the marae, demanding Maori control of the land and resource. Kaumatua met with Paul East in an attempt to diffuse the conflict, but the minister was so insulting that they came out supporting the occupation.

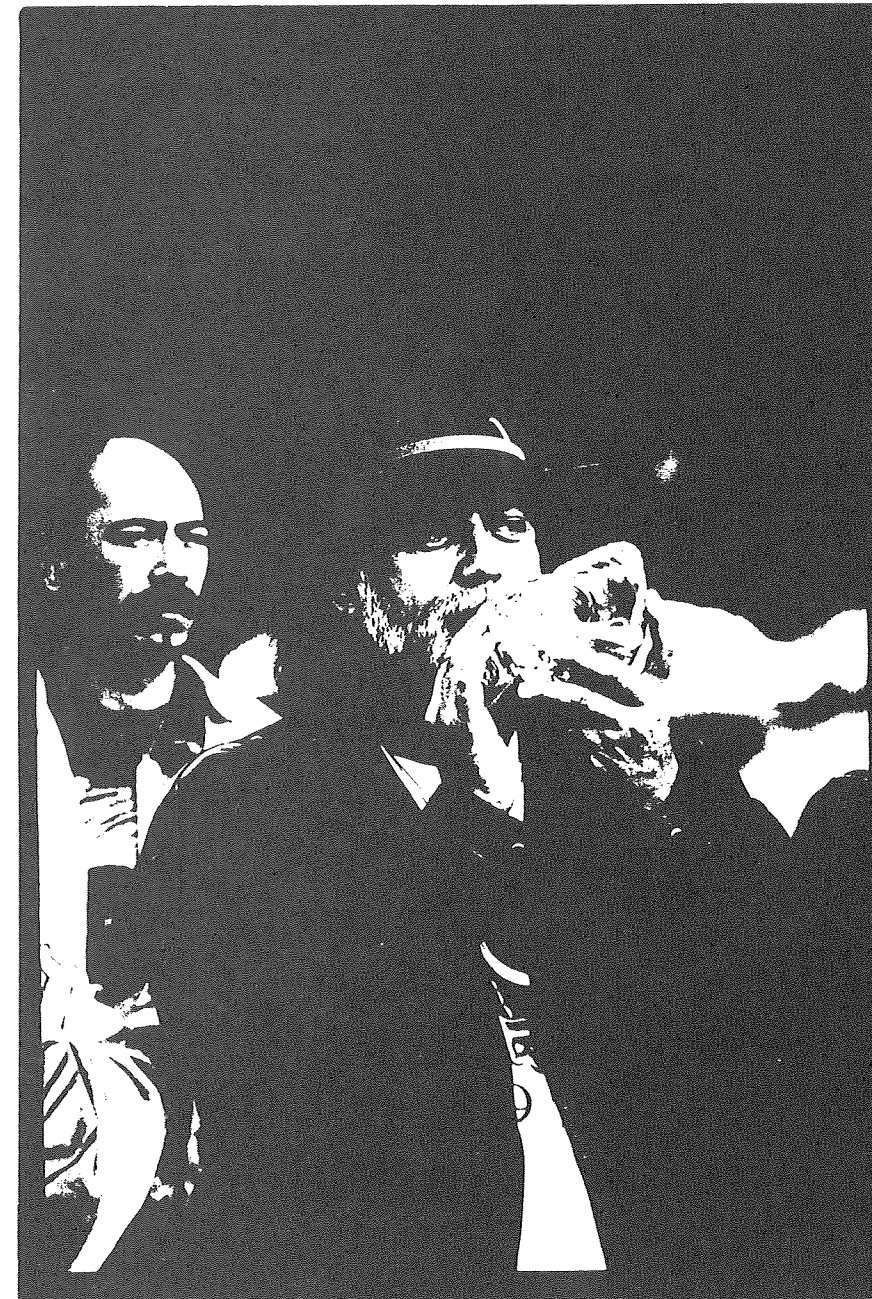
Although the media continually predict the end of this action, it seems likely that the occupation will continue for some time. The protesters are well organised, committed, and include many experienced and well regarded agitators, who are not going to meekly allow themselves to be sold out. The position of kaumatua, however, is uncertain, and they may authorise the police evicting occupiers in return for assurances of negotiation.

## Visting Pakaitore

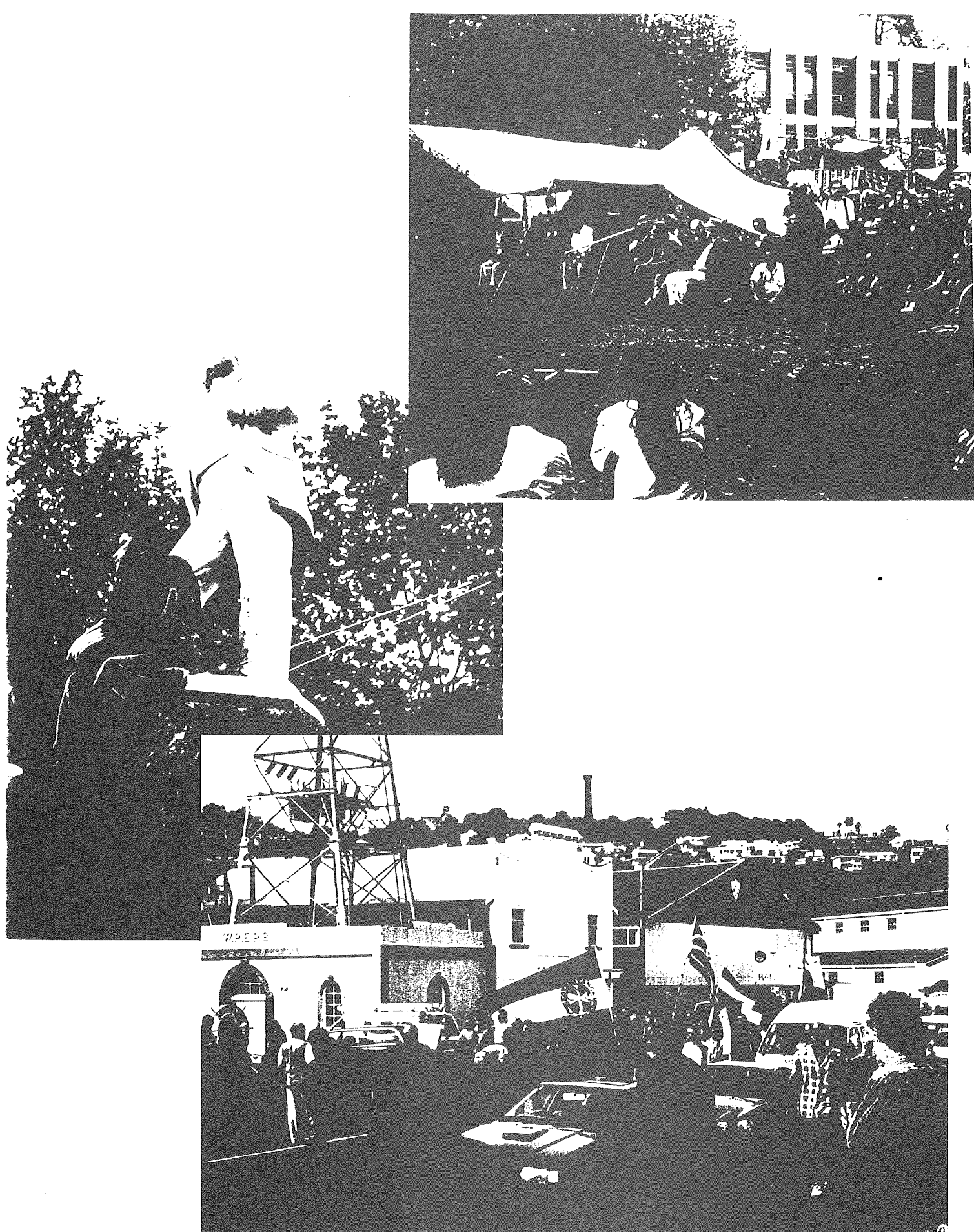
The feeling as we were powhired onto Pakaitore was that this was no mere occupation of an obscure city garden. What has been created is a fully functioning marae, and the strongest possible assertion of Whanganui-tanga. The strength, the commitment, and the aroha were overwhelming.

A number of people from AYN have stayed on the marae; we arrived the day before the eviction deadline. The atmosphere was friendly, calm, and confident. As the deadline approached, numbers swelled from 400 overnight to 2,000. Speeches and the welcoming of new groups continued most of the day, but tension was building. As 5pm passed, we were packed together, singing songs of unity, ranging from Maori waiata to Bob Marley. Any tension was replaced by a party atmosphere; a hangi and concerts followed.

The next day, numbers fell to their normal level. Te Whanau o Pakaitore will carry the occupation on; for the rest of us, it is time to act locally, and to be prepared to return when the need arises.







All articles on the occupations by David Felming, Auckland. Photos courtesy David and Craccum.

# Counter-ACT

From Page 5

On Monday 13 March, 50 people picketed the policy launch of the right wing party ACT. The protest was organised by Counter-ACT, a coalition of groups including the AYN members. They believe that ACT's policies, if implemented, would be a disaster for many in New Zealand.

ACT had spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on their launch, and were assured of considerable media coverage. Counter-ACT's aim was to secure of much of this coverage as possible to expose ACT, to show there is resistance to them, and that others have a positive vision.

The demonstration was noisy but non-violent. People going into the conference were handed pamphlets explaining Counter-ACT's position, speeches alternated with chanting, and leaders were heckled.

Although protesters remained peaceful, many attending the conference were aggressive and contemptuous, one having to be escorted in by guards. Donna Awatere-Huata's husband, Wi Huata then showed how democratic ACT are by twice punching Counter-ACT spokesperson Sue Bradford in the face, and then threatening to do the same to a journalist. He pleaded guilty to assault, received diversion, and then threatened Ms Bradford again outside the court. The party supported Huata's action, with Trevor DeCleene acting as his lawyer, making it clear that ACT think it is normal and acceptable to attack protesters.

Protest organisers were pleased both with the numbers who turned out, and the range of groups represented. All media coverage centred on Huata's action, and there was no coverage at all of ACT's policies, making their launch ineffective.

ACT have attempted to use Coun-

ter-ACT to promote themselves, trying to make themselves appear more dynamic. It is because of this that the group only holds actions at selected events which ACT are already promoting.

This was Counter-ACT's second major action, following the 5 November party launch which around 150 protesters attended, gaining considerable media exposure. They are committed to actions at future ACT events, and can be contacted via Box 3813 Auckland.

One of the more notable, and less publicised of ACT's new policies is that there should be no government funding of tertiary study what-so-ever. Although this would lead to fees from \$10,000 to \$45,000, and no allowances, there has been no reaction from students' associations. Members of Counter-ACT believe this illustrates the need for them to continue their work.

## • Counter-ACT

### John Banks Protest

Following the "Hone" Carter fiasco, a group of around 35 people picketed Radio Pacific during John Banks' talkback show. The protesters, including AYN members, were led by Auckland University Maori group Te Kawa Maro. They believed that John Banks was a willing participant in the "Hone" calls for which John Carter lost his job as chief whip and felt that much of Mr Banks' material is racist, making Mr Banks' continuing roles as talk-back host and Minister of Tourism incompatible. Repeated slogans were "Bigot Banks Off the Air!" and "Radio Pacific; Racist Radio!". The action received extensive support from passers by, and positive media attention.

• David Fleming, Auckland

What to do with the forests in Rongahere becomes a cost factor for ECNZ and an environmental problem of international proportions.

If the project proceeded, the large exotic and indigenous forest in the Rongahere Gorge would be destroyed, along with large areas of pasture land, thus adding to greenhouse gas emissions through their disposal and decay. A "carbon sink" regenerating forest would not replace it, thus doubling the carbon emission damage caused by the project.

Such carbon emission problems would add to the cost of the project if 'replacement' forests had to be planted by ECNZ - not necessarily even in NZ though. It could be in Peru. This would make investment in such a project even more non forthcoming.

The cost of a dam at Tuapeka has been estimated by Forest and Bird at around \$2 billion. This is nearly \$6 million per megawatt, over twice the cost of Stratford and 3-4 times the cost of wind power, which is without Hydro's problems with location and transmission loss.

A legal challenge by the Petroleum companies to the Government decision on the Stratford gas generating plant may tie the courts up for about 2 years. A delay to Stratford may prompt ECNZ to put more effort into developing the lower Clutha scheme at Tuapeka Mouth. To this extent their decision to go ahead with that may come sooner rather than later.

Friends of Beaumont, 1995

Setting the Record Straight: Social Developments in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Jane Kelsey and Mike O'Brien. Published by Association of Non-Governmental Organisations of Aotearoa, 1995. 64 pages, \$5 from ANGOA, PO Box 12-497 Wellington.

This book was written as an answer to the New Zealand Government report to the United Nations Social Development Summit. It "presents the other side of the story, and challenges the New Zealand government's failure at home and abroad to face up to the social crisis its policies have provoked."

The appeal, however, should be broader as the effects of ten years of restructuring are set out clearly and simply. A range of social areas are discussed, from poverty, health and housing to changes in Treaty policy. Government policy, economic changes, and social effects are all covered, yet the book remains concise.

This is not an even-handed assessment of all facets of New Zealand's economy. Rather, it assumes that enough has been said about the 'recovery', and shows the effects this has had on disadvantaged groups.

The decade covered has been one of the most important in New Zealand's history. Union membership fell from 45% in 1989 to 27% in 1993; benefits were cut; foodbank use rose massively, with a six-fold increase in 1993 alone.... The effects of these, and numerous other changes are documented.

Evidence is provided for each statement made. Some of the claims made have been criticised, but the book has largely withstood such attacks. The hostile reaction of the government should be seen as an indication that the authors are achieving what they set out to do.

Setting the Record Straight is one of the most easy to use, comprehensive, and authoritative reports to be published on New Zealand politics and economics for some time. It is highly recommended to anyone with any interest in politics.

## Points of Unity?

*"It won't be an elite group of hit and split activists who will realise revolution but a spirit of responsibility and community sweeping away the apathy and alienation of this death culture" - Claron O'Reilly, State Adversary, Summer 1995.*

Most people I know would agree with Claron that small groups of activists won't make the revolution. Yet so many of us work from, and spend much of our lives within, these small groups. Some are waiting for the revolution to emerge so they can take over leadership of it, some deny that they are or want to be leaders, others claim that they are living the revolution every day, a few don't want a revolution, and most don't even think about it.

Division and disharmony on 'the left' is unfortunate and something that should be overcome. Not that I want a uniformity of views - the idea makes me sick. It's important and vital for the health of 'the movement(s)' and of society that we have different organisations, perspectives and approaches. But so often we are divided because of stupid reasons, or simply a lack of communication.

Simple calls for unity are, of course, usually idealistic and naive. Those who have survived in activism for a few years often (always?) have their own causes, bases of support (including material resources), and priorities that are important to them and can't be put aside to work on 'someone else's issue', or with someone who they've had a bad experience with before, or someone they don't trust. Unity, common cultures of resistance, whatever, must be based on realities.

Most times when we work together, it is on limited projects - the next action, the next conference, the next submission. Though useful, limiting

ourselves to these limited points of contact seems, if done in isolation, ultimately dispiriting and destructive. If we are not talking or attacking each other the rest of the time, why be hypocrites when someone puts out a call to action?

I don't have any particular answer about how to overcome such problems. One problem that I feel is important, however, is the lack of discussion about where we are going long term and the lack of analysis about where we have been. Few of us know our own history, and those that do aren't teaching the rest of us. How often do we look at the way we organise the people we are working with (rather than ourselves, the activists), and think of what we did right and wrong? Few of us have real ideas about what we would do 'the day after the revolution' - save vague mentions of workers councils or the appropriation of capital or whatever else.

If we aren't discussing where we are going, and most of us aren't, then what are our disagreements about? Personalities, priorities, tactics, slogans, the relative importance of issues, the ideological issues of the past. All things that are important, but are they fundamental? The emerging attempts of the anarchist movement to discuss what an anarchist society would look like seems to me to be a positive step forward. This is in both allowing the anarchist 'movement' a greater clarity about its aims, and in allowing greater debate between anarchists and 'fellow travellers' about issues other than tactics and ideology in isolation.

I hope that a unity, based on more than action, can be found in the sharing of hopes for the future, in community, and in a culture of struggle.

# Thoughts on "Red Azalea" and Activism

Red Azalea - Communist China as you have never seen it before. The bleakness of a country which destroys the potential of an individual in the name of solidarity. For a book which tells the story of the vast nature of Communist China, there is a great deal of penetration into the nature of activism in Aotearoa - too easily recognised.

But this is not a book review. It does demand to be read and for each of us to make our interpretation as we will. Here, I attempt as a resident leftie to answer some of the questions that Red Azalea reminded me of; not a new, but an old and rather sad series of questions. To whom I addressing this - whoever is honest enough to see themselves. These questions need to be answered because I have seen many friends leave activists circles. They must be answered because now, slightly more than a year ago I left the arena of true grass roots politics and moved to the quieter, pseudo-bureaucratic environment of the Students Association. Now, I am reluctant to return. I still have my ideals and a great deal of passion for them - so why this reluctance (but only for a year of course!, I tell myself)?

## Dirty Dogma

"Studying Chairman Mao's works, we must learn to be efficient. We should apply his teaching to ensure a fast result..." (p. 100)".

Dogma. Single minded and pedantic, an approach of black and white. A refusal to become creative and judgement for those who deviate. We who are 'united' are perpetually talking each other to bits. But aren't you taking it to bits, you ask affronted? Yes. But I am not attacking your soul as it were, I am attacking your superficiality.

At what price do we dare to call ourselves Trotskyists or Maoists? I doubt it is for healthy debate and the extension of the intellectual mind. Neither is the "common good" an adequate claim to fame. It seems that this dogmatic disease falls to that most vulnerable group, young men. Early symptoms include not being able to express oneself and - they seem to be easily stifled in expression of genuine interest and concern for others. Those lucky enough to have the built in immunity of self examination are extremely lucky (but don't hurry to pat yourself on the back!)

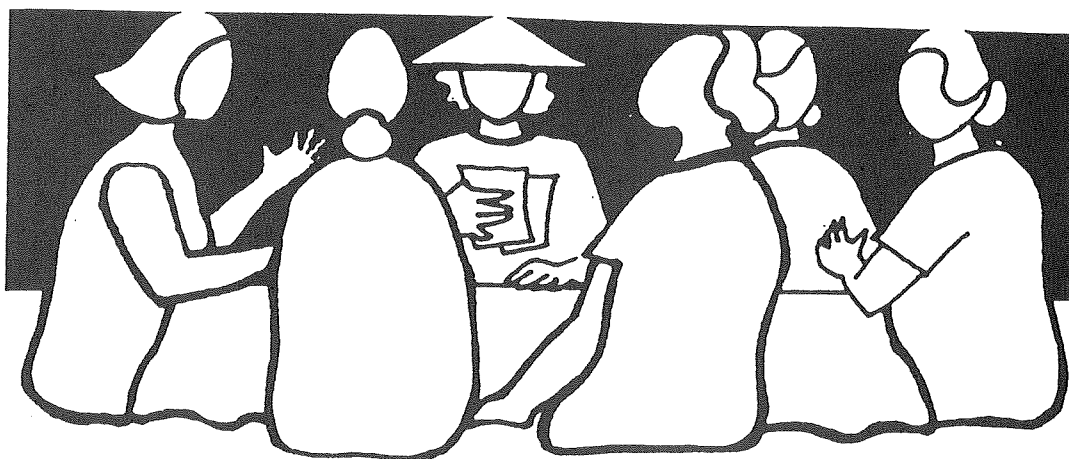
For the others, I feel forced to make this conclusions. They lack essen-

tially an identity - so they appropriate one. They are not content to be a socialist, they must be of a specific type. Sadly, these 'types' almost always contain cruel patriarchal vestiges. These are expressed well! It is seen in the meetings where the men speak above and over women; it is seen when the women distribute the pamphlets and paint the banners while the men engage in heated, intellectual and competitive debate. These 'types' of dogma also all too often allow for violence cloaked in velvety dogmatic justifications - any reference here to solely physical violence is simplistic. We underestimate the effect of outright psychological violence towards one another.

Worst of all I feel denied of some potentially fantastic male friends. Because you have greeted me with political terminology, enraged me in meetings and never let down your guard we have both missed out.

And so to the Pub!

To those male friends on both





political and non political circles who have gone beyond this, thank you. Next time we others have a beer lets leave our dogma behind and just invite ourselves. Let me extend this invitation beyond the men. Most of us have been cursed by this act at one time or another. One of my greatest mistakes was to become so engrossed in politics it was all I could talk about. I forgot that people existed under their political skin - the one we are prepared to show. I lost friends during this time. Thankfully many of them were patient enough to realise a bit of personal growth when they saw it. I hope they now see that I do give a damn, even if it took a while.

T tired to warn someone at the beginning of last year about this aspect of leftist politics as she and a friend began distancing themselves. Of course there were both sides but the all consuming nature of activism took a great share of the toll.

#### Judgement Day.

".. I gave speeches in every nights self confession and criticism meeting. I put my weakness on the table. Everyone did the same. We helped each other to examine our thoughts, to get rid of the incorrect ones. We believed if we failed to do so, our hearts would be murdered by bourgeois evil spirits." (P.54).

Scrutiny, judgement and factionalism are strange qualities to attribute to friendship, yet activists seem intent on it. How can any individual be the best they can be when they feel a blade inching towards their back. I have yet to see a success story resulting from petty, aggressive factionalism. The excitement of a brainstorming session when we put our labels and labelling aside and allow ourselves to become open minded makes us formidable. Yet to say so, to risk the works 'open-minded', risks being branded a post structuralist. What (gasp) could be worse! I lay myself on the table for our benefit as well as my own, but I risk being butchered.

Perhaps it is because we are so frequently the judge of the system(s) around us that we have forgotten how to accept one another. Pettiness and useless factionalism is the result.

#### Activism in a void.

"Loneliness penetrated me.. my mind had become rusted. It seemed not to be functioning." (P.610)

It seems so strange for a movement devoted to the care of the underprivileged that we should stop caring for each other, recognise that we are often exhausted and that we constantly fail to put aside that rigorous political agenda even for a moment. As a result loneliness penetrates activism in Aotearoa. This is why I am reluctant to return. I am reluctant to be lonely.

#### A recruiting ground for the Right.

I sense the reverberation of that statement! Reading Red Azalea was a waking reminder of the reality of careless activism, the pain of factionalism, the isolation among "friends - become - colleagues" and the apathy that results. We are no better than ACT or SPUC, or any other enemy of the left, if we forget friendships for the terminology of Solidarity. This is not a call for 90's New Age notions of love. It is a request that we simply give a damn; that we remember that the person next to us needs a greeting that goes beyond "How was your workshop at the conference?". We need to build our self esteem as activists on something beyond our ability to quote Mao or our adherence to a single fundamental line of thought.

If we do we will shrink as individuals, isolate ourselves and drive others away. A robotic movement that exists along strictly categorised lines and impersonal relationships will die each time it tires to breathe.

• Fiona Clayton, Dunedin.

## National Peace Workshops Update.

*Workshops, panel discussions, recreation, fun, ideas, networking, opportunities, solidarity.*

#### New Costs:

\$60 waged  
\$35 unwaged  
\$15 High school student  
or negotiable.

Mattresses will be provided, but bring your own pillows and sleeping bags. Transport from the Picton / the ferry will be provided for free by prior arrangement. For directions on how to get there, keep your eyes open for the pamphlet which should be coming to you soon in the mail, or else contact PMA or Julie Cave at 03 526 7701 (Motueka) or the Nelson Environment Centre at 03 548 9390.

#### Recap on basic info:

2 - 5 June at Riverside Community, RD 2 Upper Moutere, Motueka, Nelson.

Maaori - Pakeha Issues in Aotearoa, AYN, activists skills, tour of Riverside, Waihopai Spybase, Foreign Control, Conflict Resolution. Registration - National Peace Workshops, Riverside Community, Upper Moutere.

Vegetarian and vegan food will be provided, except for one evening while on local marae (so private arrangements will have to be made). Child care and other needs by arrangements.

See you there!

• Louise May, PMA.

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## Coming Up

**Radical Society Forum - Freedom of Speech.** May 30, Victoria University. Contact Alistair Shaw or Christina Rizos.

**Peace Movement Aotearoa National Peace Workshops.** Riverside Community, Nelson, Queen's Birthday Weekend. Contact Julie Cave or PMA (see update).

**Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Auckland and Queenstown,** mid November. If interested in helping organise protest, contact Auckland Unemployed Workers Rights Centre, PO Box 3183, Auckland, or AYN.

**Women's Education Coalition Aotearoa (WECA) Conference.** End of November. For info, or to help, phone Jan on 04 471 2559.

## Changes to AYN?

In response to Kate McPherson's article in the last AYN about directions to take the magazine in, I would like to make a few observations about money and time.

First of all, AYN is constantly losing money. We get around this by grants and donations - but it is a losing battle. This also leaves us nothing for phone calls to contacts and others, for writing to people in between mags, for contacting new people, and the like.

Also, 'events' are moving rather quickly at the moment. There is a lot happening politically, and I would like AYN to be able to respond to these, and possibly influence these, more quickly. This would mean coming out more often. Also, I would really like to be able to increase the number of people who get AYN - increasing subscriptions, and the number of people we give it away to.

I would like to make some suggestions about where we could go. I think we should put out AYN at least monthly. But where we have enough to publish, or a lot is happening, we should go to 'press' anyway, without waiting for the end of the month. So, in effect, we would be printing more than monthly. Subscriptions would change from being yearly to being based on the number that we receive.

Initially, I think we should have a small price increase - \$10 for 10 issues for unwaged / low waged, \$20 for 10 for high waged. We could balance this increase by charging \$15 and \$30 for 20 issues, effectively the same price as now. If we can increase our sub base a bit more, then we can break even, and get AYN printed rather than photocopied. The more donations and grants we get, of course, means the more we can look at reducing prices to as low as possible. We currently have 2 people giving weekly automatic payments - if anyone else would be willing to do this, please, please write!!!!

These are of course, suggestions. Hopefully we can talk about all of this at the National Peace Workshops - or write with your opinions.

Joss Debreceeny.

## Subscriptions:

\$9 Unwaged / Student

\$18 Waged

\$25 Organisation

\$50 Institution

This subscription is for a whole year (12 issues). If you cannot afford this, write to us and we will send you AYN anyway. We appreciate any and all articles, news, art, criticism and gossip!

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Otepoti / Dunedin

Victor